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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: FORMER PM ALLAWI: IRAQ NEEDS PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS
AND NO PRECIPITATED AMERICAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for Reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: During a September 15 meeting, Iyad Allawi, former Prime Minister and current leader of the secular "Iraqiya" parliamentary bloc, told the Ambassador that Iraq needs its political leaders to develop a greater consensus about key issues like provincial elections, constitutional reform and security. He outlined for the Ambassador his efforts to convene broad-based discussions among the country's various power blocs, with the aim of forging that national consensus. The Ambassador noted that Allawi and many in his parliamentary bloc were too often absent from Iraq and thus missed the chance to influence the national debate. Allawi assured the Ambassador he would be spending more time in Baghdad. After the Ambassador explained the necessity of putting in place a Strategic Framework Agreement, Allawi criticized the GOI's handling of negotiations for the SoFA and worried that in its absence a "bloody massacre" would follow a premature withdrawal of coalition forces. Allawi also considered an extensive international monitoring effort essential to ensure successful provincial elections, and tied the passage of an elections law to his national dialogue concept. We believe PM Maliki would likely perceive Allawi's national dialogue effort, should it gain any traction, as an attempt to undermine him and empower his adversaries. End summary.

Kurds and Turks

12. (C) On September 15, the Ambassador called on Iyad Allawi, former Prime Minister and currently leader of the secular Iraqiya parliamentary bloc (with 25 parliamentary seats) September 15. The Ambassador conveyed his condolences over the death of Allawi's uncle, Tawfiq Allawi (the father of Mohammed Allawi, former Minister of Communications). Thanking the Ambassador, Allawi noted that he had recently returned from a trip to Turkey, where he had met with President Gul. Allawi said he had urged Gul to engage with the KRG leadership, which was not supportive of the anti-Turkish PKK.

13. (C) Allawi reported that Gul had been amenable to the suggestion, and penned a constructive message to KRG President Barzani, which Allawi delivered during a brief stop in Erbil on his way back to Baghdad. Allawi said that he had told Barzani that he could not keep fighting everyone. Barzani needed to slow down and calm down. The Ambassador agreed, noting that the Kurds' current position is the best they have enjoyed in their modern history. It was not in the Kurds' interest to jeopardize this position by over-playing their hand (e.g. by trying to expand Kurdish controlled areas farther southward) at this stage.

¶4. (C) Allawi said that he had pitched to Barzani, (Sunni) Vice President Hashemi, and key Shi'a (and ISCI) leader Ammar al-Hakim, the idea of a broad meeting encompassing all of Iraq's major power blocs, to include the Sahwa (Sunni awakening councils) and "the resistance." Allawi saw such a gathering as an opportunity to forge a new national consensus which could break Baghdad's political deadlock and bridge deepening fault lines between the GOI and the Kurds, between Sunnis and Shi'a, as well as divisions within the Sunni and Shi'a communities. Barzani, Hashemi, and Hakim had each reacted favorably, Allawi reported.

¶5. (C) The Ambassador observed that the atmosphere of improved security had brought to the surface a whole host of issues that had previously remained in the background. Allawi heartily agreed and expanded on this theme. Iraq continues to suffer from constitutional ambiguities and contradictions - the foundation for the state laid out in 2005 remains shaky, he argued. A national unity dialogue should confront and remedy the gaps in the constitution. Given the growing tensions between the Kurds and the central government, the implementation of Article 140 (which addresses resolution of territorial disputes created by Saddam's policies) should be among the first topics the group dealt with.

¶6. (C) Repeating that Barzani, Hashemi, and Hakim had expressed support for a national unity dialogue, Allawi also anticipated that (former Prime Minister) Ibrahim Jafari,

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though not PM Maliki's Dawa party, would support the effort. Allawi urged the Ambassador to lobby Embassy contacts to support his dialogue initiative. "Your good offices will be key" to convincing the various parties to participate, he underlined. Without more discussions among Iraqi political leaders, the security situation will again deteriorate, and the GOI will ultimately founder, he warned. The Ambassador noted that Allawi and many in his parliamentary bloc were often absent from Iraq and thus missed the chance to influence the national debate. Allawi assured the Ambassador he would be spending more time in Baghdad.

SOFA

¶7. (C) Allawi lamented that the GOI has been sending out mixed and contradictory signals about the official Iraqi position on the Strategic Framework Agreement. The Ambassador cautioned that while the two sides were close to an agreement, until there is agreement on every point there is not an agreement. "There is no third option," the Ambassador emphasized, and U.S. forces will not remain in Iraq without a legal basis. The atmosphere in the UN Security Council appears to preclude an extension of the UN mandate. A precipitate withdrawal of U.S. forces would result in a "bloody massacre" in Iraq, Allawi noted darkly. The GOI must "act responsibly" and in its handling of the negotiations and "pay attention to details."

¶8. (C) Reacting to an earlier SOFA draft text he had seen, Allawi expressed discomfort with a provision authorizing military operations in pursuit of "outlaws." Allawi worried that the GOI would manipulate the definition of "outlaws" for political gain. The Ambassador assured Allawi that U.S. would be able to distinguish between legitimate security targets and political adversaries and would not be bound to undertake any operations that lacked a valid security basis.

Elections

¶9. (C) Allawi considered an extensive international monitoring effort essential to ensure successful provincial elections. "The intimidation and killing has already started," he warned, citing an early September attack that killed three Iraqi elections officials in Basra. A petition is circulating in the parliament, already signed by 126 members, demanding international observation of the next elections. The Ambassador observed that the first hurdle was for parliament to pass a law that will allow the elections take place. Allawi agreed there was a danger that Iraq might continue to drift indefinitely without elections, a situation that would be "extremely dangerous" and leave Iraq vulnerable to forces opposed to stability and reconciliation. Allawi said that the continued deadlock on the elections law, and its harmful implications, underscored the need for the national dialogue he was proposing.

Comment

¶10. (C) We doubt that Prime Minister Maliki will support Allawi's efforts to bring Iraq's competing power blocs together for a national unity dialogue. Instead, we anticipate Maliki will perceive the concept, should it gain any traction, as an effort to undermine him and empower his adversaries.

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